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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1203
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RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 1929
RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU PRIORITY 1473
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 0358
RUEHDB/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0039
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 0758
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU//TCH// PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000489

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TX](#) [AJ](#) [UZ](#) [TI](#) [AF](#) [KG](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY EAGER TO COOPERATE ON CENTRAL ASIA

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Classified by Deputy Polcouns Kelly Degnan for Reasons 1.4
(b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Turkish government officials agreed with SCA
DAS Evan Feigenbaum to explore complementary cooperation
where possible on our approaches to Central Asia (septel).
Representatives from the Turkish General Staff, the Turkish
International Cooperation Administration, the Foreign Trade
Secretariat and the Ministry of Transportation elaborated on

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Turkish involvement in Central Asia in meetings February 26
and offered ideas for future collaboration. End Summary.

Military Cooperation

¶2. (C) Turkish General Staff J5 LTG Hilmi Zorlu enumerated
Turkish military support to the Central Asian nations, to
include the training to date of nearly 900 Central Asian
military personnel in Turkish service academies, civilian
universities and the Partnership for Peace training center.
The Turkish military is focusing its training efforts on
changing the mentality of younger officers and soldiers.
Turkey advocates a slow, steady approach to Central Asia to
avoid exacerbating Russian concerns.

¶3. (C) Feigenbaum briefed Zorlu on U.S. efforts to develop
more robust security relationships with Central Asia, through
NATO's Partnership for Peace, the establishment of military
bases such as Manas in Kyrgyzstan, and provision of training
and equipment. The U.S. and Turkey would benefit from
coordinated its approaches and messages to Central Asian
nations. As a fellow NATO member with troops in Afghanistan,
Feigenbaum asked for Zorlu's support in convincing
Kyrgyzstan of the importance of our continued use of Manas
airbase to our efforts in Afghanistan. Zorlu stressed the
importance of combining military assistance with economic aid

for civilian populations. He and Feigenbaum agreed that we can both work with Kazakhstan, while Uzbekistan will be more difficult. We are just beginning to establish a dialogue with Turkmenistan, taking advantage of openings following Niyazov's death in December, Zorlu said.

14. (C) Feigenbaum explained the U.S. strategy of promoting energy competition and free markets in Central Asia. We do not demand Central Asians scrap existing contracts with Russia, but rather encourage them to consider alternatives for new production. Zorlu highlighted persistent Russian attempts to "break up" development of east-west energy corridors by promoting north-south alternatives through Armenia and Iran, or by trying to financially dominate these corridors in the case of the Burgas route through Bulgaria and Greece. Feigenbaum suggested that Turkey continue to encourage good relations between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan on energy and other issues.

Development Collaboration Possibilities

15. (C) In his meeting with Turkish International Cooperation Administration (USAID equivalent) Acting President Mustafa Sahin, Feigenbaum called for dialogue and cooperation with Turkey on providing assistance to Central Asia. Sahin described TICA as employing a "demand-driven" approach and noted that they had field offices in all five of the Central Asian countries. Moreover, over half of all TICA's assistance goes to the Central Asia and Caucasus countries. Feigenbaum proposed that there be contact between TICA and USAID at the field office level and that the TICA President visit USAID in Washington, in part to discuss USAID's democracy capacity building assistance. Sahin offered that while TICA did not provide democracy building assistance, all of the TICA assistance contributed indirectly to this goal.

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He opined that although Uzbekistan was a difficult partner, TICA maintains programs there related to activities supporting vocational training, pistachio nuts, seeds, and greenhouses.

Foreign Trade Opportunities

16. (C) DAS Feigenbaum's meeting with Hasan Yalcin, Deputy Director General for Agreements at the Foreign Trade Undersecretariat (FTU), focused on U.S. efforts to improve the investment climate in the five Central Asian Republics. Feigenbaum cited the significant U.S. investment in these countries and encouraged Turkish to point for Caspian oil and gas and would be open to future collaborative efforts. He suggested that this topic could be included in the upcoming U.S.-Turkey Trade and Investment Framework Agreement Council meeting, tentatively scheduled for late March or early April.

Transportation Options

17. (C) In a meeting with Suat Hayri Aka, Deputy Undersecretary of Transport and Communications, Deutsch described current efforts to improve roadways and air travel in this region to compensate for the lack of railways. He focused on efforts to improve the customs services in these countries and to expand and improve civil aviation. U/S Aka agreed that these countries could learn from Turkish Airlines' experience in the region and that perhaps Turkish construction companies could play a role in these projects. He expressed Turkey's interest in future collaboration.

18. (U) SCA DAS Feigenbaum cleared this message.

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